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Messrs. Robbins, Lothrop, and Torrey were appointed a Committee to publish a volume from the "Mather Papers," belonging to the Old South Church, but now on loan to this Society for publication.

MAY MEETING.

A stated monthly meeting of the Society was held this day, Thursday, May 9, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; the President, the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

The Librarian announced donations from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the American Numismatic and Archæological Society; the Essex Institute; the Mercantile-Library Association of San Francisco; the Minnesota Historical Society; the State Historical Society of Iowa; the Trustees of the Peabody Institute; the editors of the "Advocate;" the proprietors of the "Heraldic Journal;" Professor Louis Agassiz; John Appleton, M.D.; H. W. Bryant, Esq.; Mr. H. H. Clements; John H. Ellis, Esq.; Hon. Hugh B. Grigsby; Edward Jarvis, M.D.; Brantz Mayer, Esq.; Edward B. O'Callaghan, M.D.; Mr. Oliver J. Rand; Rev. Noah H. Schenck, D.D.; Mr. William H. Taylor; Ebenezer Torrey, Esq.; Hon. Henry Wilson; Mrs. Joseph E. Worcester; Stephen J. Young, Esq.; and from Messrs. T. C. Amory, W. G. Brooks, Deane, Denny, Green, E. E. Hale, Latham, C. Robbins, Wheatland, and Winthrop, of the Society.

The President communicated a letter from William T. Davis, Esq., of Plymouth, inclosing a number of early papers, chiefly brief depositions taken before the early magistrates of that colony. These contained the autograph signatures of William Bradford, the Deputy Governor; James Cudworth; Thomas Hinkley; Josiah Winslow; Nathaniel Morton; Samuel Sprague; John Freeman; John Thacher; and Barnabas Lothrop. A letter of James Otis, of the following century, was included in the parcel.

A suitable acknowledgment was directed to be made for this gift.

Mr. HALE desired to be excused from serving on the Committee appointed to publish a volume of "Washington Papers" from letters in the possession of the family of the late Edward Everett, as he felt himself quite inadequate to the labor involved.

Mr. Hale's request was granted, and Mr. Waterston and Mr. Amory now constitute that Committee.

Mr. AMORY read a letter, addressed to himself from A. G. P. Dodge, Esq., of New York, inclosing a list of valuable relics of the late President Madison, which were offered for sale; and inquiring if this Society, or any similar institution, would like to purchase them. The Society took no action on this communication, leaving it for any member to avail himself of the information it contained.

Mr. HALE asked leave to deposit in an upper room of the Society, for a short time, Duchesne's models of buildings in the city of Boston. The application was referred to the Standing Committee, with full power.

Mr. DEANE read the following letter, addressed to himself, from our Corresponding Member, the Hon. Hugh Blair Grigsby, of Virginia, giving the origin of the name "Newport's News."

Hon. Hugh Blair Grigsby to Charles Deane, Esq.

EDGEHILL, NEAR CHARLOTTE C. H., VIRGINIA,
April 14, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR, — I cheerfully comply with your request to give what I deem the true spelling, as well as the true meaning, of the name commonly written and printed "Newport's News." It is the most remarkable instance of a departure from the true spelling of a name, begun two hundred and forty-two years ago, and continued ever since, that has occurred in our history. It presents likewise an interesting example of the pertinacity with which the popular ear has, through a long trail of generations, retained the sound of the true name, in spite of an error which was almost contemporaneous with its origin, and which prevails at the present day. It is likewise instructive to note, in the repeated stages of the spelling of the name, a restlessness of the public mind, and a dim consciousness that something was wrong, without the ability to point out where the error lay. This inquiry has now an additional interest from the fact, that a new impulse has been recently given to the fortunes of Newport's News; and that, having first been made the outlet of a vast network of western railroads, it may become the port of exportation and importation of a large part of the products and of the commerce of the West.

I will first trace the word through its popular spellings during the last sixty or seventy years, and then pursue its history, through our public records. And, first, as to the popular spelling. Let me observe that, from the origin of the name to the present day, it has ever been pronounced Newport-Nuse, as if the word "News" was spelt Nuse, the hard sound of the "s" being always distinguishable. I speak of its pronunciation by veritable sailors, the genuine Old Salts; and not the modern hybrid of the sea, the steamboat man, who has rarely been out of sight of the shore. Such was the pronunciation of my youth, and I have adhered to it throughout life. Now, there is a plain distinction between the sounds of Newport-Nuse with the hard sound of "s," and Newport's News; and an effort was made by the press

to conform the spelling to the popular pronunciation. As history recorded no *news* in connection with Newport, it was very properly deemed that there was some mistake about that word; and, as there was in the adjoining State of North Carolina a river called the Neuse, and as our early associations with that State had been intimate, it was thought that there may have been some relation between Newport and that river, which, in the lapse of years, had been forgotten; and accordingly the name of our veteran Admiral Newport and the name of the fair water-nymph of Carolina were joined together for a term of years in a most affectionate union.* But there arose by degrees a conviction in the public mind, that the union between the old salt and the fresh-water nymph was illegitimate; and ultimately there was a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* between the parties, and a new name was hunted up for the old man.

About this time, some curious persons, who visited the spot, observed a curve in the shore; and, connecting the curve with the image of a noose, such as a Mexican flings over the horns of wild cattle, thought that they had discovered the origin of the name. Indeed, as late as 1864, an eminent writer of the American Antiquarian Society says, "that an antiquarian friend told him that he was passing Newport's News thirty years ago on a steamer, and the old pilot told him that they called it Newport's Noose, and pointed to the cove at the northwest point of land as the noose," — the very noose that gave name to the place.†

But this new spelling, whether from the conviction that a curved line could not be a noose, which to hold any thing securely should be circular and movable, or from the well-known tendency of error "to writhe amid her worshippers," soon had its day; and the newspapers once more fell back upon the old word "News," and were upheld by some ingenious person, who was kind enough to sustain the reading by an incident in our history. The story runs, that on the memorable occasion, when the starving colonists, reduced to a mere handful of men, had in their four small vessels departed from Jamestown for good and all, they met the ships of Captain Newport, filled with fresh emi-

* At the great massacre of 1622, which happened a few months after the naming of Newport's News, some of the Virginia colonists took refuge in North Carolina. Campbell's History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia, 164, where Martin's History of North Carolina, i. 87, is cited. I quote the Philadelphia edition of 1860, of Campbell.

† Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, October, 1864. See note to the Remarks of Charles Deane, Esq., pp. 71, 72.

grants and stores of provisions, off this very point of Newport's News, and joyfully returned with their deliverers to the deserted city. The misfortune of this narrative is, that there is hardly a word of truth in it. It is, indeed, true, that in 1610 the colonists did leave Jamestown; but, instead of reaching Newport's News, they had gone only as far as Mulberry Island, in the James, a long distance from the place in question; and, instead of meeting Captain Newport, in command of the relieving fleet, they met a longboat from the fleet which was commanded by Sir Thomas West, Lord Delaware, and forthwith returned to Jamestown.* Now Newport was really present on this occasion, — which, by the way, happened eleven years before "Newport's News" was named, — but was one of the poor starving colonists himself, and returned with his fellow-sufferers to the settlement. Thus it is plain that Newport and Newport's News had no connection with the case.

Let us trace the name in our histories and on the map. I would observe that the spelling of common, and more especially of proper, names was, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, unsettled and arbitrary; and that our hero, Captain Smith, seems to have spelt the names of men by the ear, and without any regard to their orthography. Thus Smith, as late as 1624, spells the name of Newport, whom he had known so long and so well, *Nuport*; and he spells the name of the same person differently at different times. The first mention of the name of Newport's News is in Smith's General History, first published in 1624, where it is printed *Nuport's Newes*.† It is mentioned by Beverley and Stith, and in every instance the final word is spelt News; but no explanation, which the writer ought to have given and would have given if he could, and which, if the word had been designed to commemorate some remarkable incident in our history, would have been reported, is given by Smith or Stith. Beverley, whose history of Virginia appeared in 1705, alone alludes to its origin, and says, "It was in October, 1621, that Sir Francis Wyatt arrived governor; and in November, Captain Newport arrived with fifty men imported at his own charge, besides passengers, and made a plantation on Newport's News, *naming it after himself*."‡ Here, then, the important fact is stated that Newport named the place after himself,

* Campbell's History of Virginia, 97, 98.

† "Newport News" is mentioned in a letter from Virginia, under date of Feb., 1622-3. Another letter of April 8th of that year — the same which speaks of the death of Captain "Nuse," referred to in a note further on — is dated from "Newport News." (Sainsbury's Calendar of Colonial Papers, pp. 41-43.) — NOTE BY MR. DEANE.

‡ Beverley's History of Virginia, p. 38. Richmond, 1855.

that is, he gave to it his own name ; but the historian is silent about the word " News," which is certainly not a part of Newport's name ; and which, if spelt correctly, was manifestly designed to commemorate something.

On the map of Virginia, published in the middle of the last century, by Professor Fry and Mr. Jefferson, the father of the President, the word is still spelt News. As all subsequent spellings must be derived from the earliest authorities, those who tread in their footsteps throw no light upon the subject. Now I think I can show that the word " News " was never used by Newport at all ; and that Captain Smith, and his English contemporaries, were misled by the bad spelling of that age, and from the accidental coincidence of the sound of the word " News " with the sound of the word which I shall proceed to point out.

I have already quoted from Beverley a passage, in which he announces the arrival of Sir Francis Wyat, in October, 1621 ; and, in the following month, of Captain Newport, with fifty servants imported at his own expense, and the settlement of Newport at a place which he subsequently named Newport's News. It will be remembered that this was a remarkable epoch in the Colony. The emigration from England was extraordinary. During the years 1621 and 1622, three thousand five hundred emigrants had arrived ; and the prospects of the new settlement, soon to be darkened for a time by the most appalling event in our early history, were more brilliant than they had ever been before. There had been a total change in the government of Virginia, which was then established upon principles, the influence of which has been felt to the present day.* The London Company furnished the new governor, Sir Francis Wyat, with the most special instructions, all of which have come down to us in the faithful pages of Hening ; and one of which was : " George Sandys appointed treasurer ; and he is to put in execution all orders of court about staple commodities : to whom is allotted fifteen hundred acres and fifty tenants ; to the marshal Sir WILLIAM NEWCE the same."† Of George Sandis, I will only say in passing, that he was the translator of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, and of a part of the *Æneid* of Virgil ; that some of his sweet hymns are still read with delight by every lover of our fine old poetry ; and that it is pleasant to recognize such a person as holding a high office in our Colony. But Sir William

* Campbell, 150.

† Hening's Statutes at Large, i. pp. 114, 115.

Newce is a more important character for my present purposes. As marshal of the Colony, he was bound to reside at or near Newport's News; and, as we know that he lived in Elizabeth City, the county in which the point is situated, it is probable that he located his fifteen hundred acres of land at or near that place; * for it was the invariable custom of our ancestors to settle upon the banks of streams. † And, as we certainly know that Captain Newport did locate his warrants at the place which he called Newport's News, it is not improbable that the spirit of speculation which then prevailed, and which was stimulated by the recent increase of population, led those prominent men to unite their fortunes, and, in imitation of the examples of daily occurrence in the old country, to signalize their union by the adoption of their joint names as the appellation of their place. Or it may have happened that Newport, cherishing a high regard for Sir William Newce, added, in a spirit of courtesies, his name to his own. ‡

Let us recall, for a moment, a picture of that era. Let us glance at the old sailor Newport, who, having buffeted in the miserable vessels of that day for so many years the dangers of the ocean, and encountered the innumerable perils of an abode in a land of savages, is at last settled in his quiet home. He is strolling by the shore. A thought strikes him; and he pauses in his path, and gazes upon the watery waste around him. The waves of the majestic James, after a course of hundreds of miles through that fertile West, which is to be

* He resided at or near Newport's News, as we know from his efforts to aid the refugees at the time of the massacre of 1622. — *Campbell*, 164.

† "Sir William Neuce," and "Captain Thomas Neuce," are both named in "An Ordinance . . . for a Council of State and General Assembly" for Virginia, July 24, 1621. (Stith, App. p. 32.) Sir William was made "Knight-Martial of Virginia," by the king, and came over in 1621; "but died," says Stith (p. 189), "two days after the reading his Patent and Commission." Captain *Thomas* Neuce (or Newce, for Stith spells the name both ways), who was "Deputy and Superintendent of the Company's Lands," probably came over at the same time. He resided at Elizabeth City, and was regarded as a person of the highest character for efficiency and benevolence. (Ibid. p. 236.) In a letter from Virginia, dated April 3, 1623, he is said to be "lately dead;" and another letter, five days later, mentions that "Capt. Nuce died poor," and speaks of an "allowance" to his "widow and child." She was a woman highly commended for "her virtue and desert." (Sainsbury's *Calendar of Colonial Papers*, pp. 41-43; Stith, p. 237.) — NOTE BY MR. DEANE.

‡ The joint union of names, to designate joint possessions, has been common in England, time immemorial. The name of "Newport-Pagnell" has just met my eye. In Virginia, we have "Hampden-Sidney" and "Randolph-Macon;" in Pennsylvania, "Wilkesbarre;" and in Connecticut, we have "Saybrook." Had Newport-Newce been made up of any two names, neither of which could have been confounded with a common noun, the mistake would never have occurred.

peopled by future millions, and to which Jefferson in his old age fondly turned as the last hope of freedom, are murmuring at his feet. Before him is that magnificent roadstead, which is formed by the union of the James with the beauteous Elizabeth, whose silver waters, as if wooing already to her bosom the wealth of future Carolinas, are wending their way from the South ; and in which the combined navies of the world might ride with ease, and in safety from the fiercest storm. On his left lies that Mediterranean of our Commonwealth, the bay of Chesapeake, penetrating far into the interior of the North, and receiving, as its lawful tribute, the outpouring of a hundred streams. And beyond the Chesapeake, at the distance of two hours' sail, its low guardian capes almost visible in the bright atmosphere of the New World, is the blue Atlantic, which he had traversed so often, and which he knew so well. A vision of a fair town in the centre of the sea-coast of a continent, seated midway between the rigor of the North and the fervors of a torrid sun, and destined to be built on the ground on which he was standing, looms before him. And we hardly err in saying that, when we behold, even in the broader light of modern geography, that gorgeous panorama of sea and shore, with those surly castles, rising from the deep, that beleaguer it, a more imposing site for a commercial city — a true Queen of the Sea — does not exist on the face of the earth. The imagination of the old man, who was versed in the mysteries of commerce and navigation, embraces all the capabilities of the scene ; and he is determined to bestow upon the future city not only his own habitation for a dwelling-place, but his own name. He accordingly bestows his own name upon it ; for we are told expressly by Beverley that he named the place himself : but he does not bestow his own name alone. What did he add ? The word "News" ? Never ; for his history, from the first voyage to the Colony to that hour, is well known to us ; and we know that no such signal piece of intelligence as would deserve or uphold so conspicuous an illustration, occurred in his whole career. Moreover, it is obvious that such a piece of news would have made as deep an impression upon the mind of his contemporaries as on his own, and would have been remembered and recorded by our historians ; just as were recorded those reasons which led to the naming of the places from Point Comfort to the point called after that Watkins, whose namesakes, and perhaps descendants, are counted by thousands in our modern Commonwealth, and with the blood of whom my own is freely commingled. He casts his eyes over his own lands, which appear too narrow for the future city of his heart, and then turns to those of his friend and

neighbor, Sir William Newce, which adjoin his own. He appreciated the character of the knight in all its worth. As a man, as a gentleman, as a member of the British aristocracy, as the highest naval officer of the Colony, as a statesman, whose foresight was praised by Smith,* and as a philanthropist, whose beneficence, dispensed jointly by his accomplished wife, has been applauded by the latest historian of our Commonwealth,† Sir William was eminently deserving of the public regard. There was a congeniality in the tastes of the two men, which would tend to foster kind relations between them. Newport was the old admiral of the Colony; and Sir William Newce, in his character of marshal,‡ commanded the fort at or near Newport's News, abreast of which all vessels arriving from abroad backed their topsails and vailed their flags, in honor of the royal standard of St. George; and it is probable that, when Sir William in his pinnace visited a ship, he was not unfrequently attended by Newport himself, who, with the inveterate curiosity of an old sea-captain clinging to him, would be eager to know something about the voyage of the strange vessel, and learn the latest advices from home; and perhaps — though this I speak in a whisper — to wet his lips and warm his heart, with a glass or two of that pure madeira which our fathers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries quaffed in all its glory, but which we, their descendants, shall taste no more. Such was Sir William Newce, whose name Newport sought to connect with his own in all future time.

But let us suppose, for the sake of argument, and for the sake of argument only, that Beverley — who, though he did not himself live with the contemporaries of Newport, had lived with some of those who had lived with those who knew him,§ and who has deliberately recorded

* Smith's History of Virginia, ii. 77. Richmond, 1819.

† Campbell's History of Virginia, 164. Philadelphia, 1860.

‡ The marshal was not then, as in our day he is, and in a later day in the Colony probably became, a civil officer; but was, as the word implies, strictly a military one, whose duty it was to command all the forts in the settlement. Hence it was, that, while Mr. George Sandys, the friend and fellow-passenger of Sir William, took up his abode, as treasurer of the Colony, at Jamestown, the seat of government, Sir William resided in Elizabeth City County, in which Newport's News lay; at which point or at Point Comfort, or more probably at both, there was, from the earliest times, a fort to guard the outlet of the waters of the Colony. There are remains of several such forts on James River, of which we find no mention in our Statutes at Large, published by Hening, which, we know, are very defective.

§ Beverley was probably born between 1650 and 1660, say thirty-five years after the reported arrival of Newport in 1621, and the naming of the settlement. He tells us that "his first business in the world was among the records of his country," — doubt-

the arrival of Newport with his fifty men and passengers in 1621, his settlement at Newport's News, and his naming the place after himself — has fallen into some mistake; that Newport never visited the Colony after his departure in 1611; * and that the person who really did come over with the fifty men and passengers in 1621, the very month after the arrival of Sir William Newce, was none other than the famous Daniel Gookin himself, who did settle at that time, as we know that he did, at or near Newport's News, — and we readily see how the place might have received its name. Gookin, as the word implies, and as we know, was of English origin; and, though coming "out of Ireland," as stated by Smith, had never been included within the Celtic pale, and was a man of energy and intelligence. A son of his is not undistinguished in your own annals. The valor of Gookin during the massacre of 1622 has been duly recorded; and the management of his plantation, in the words of Hubbard, "to the great credit and the satisfaction of the adventurers," has been commended by Smith. Such a man, in naming his settlement, might be inclined to seek a name which would illustrate not only the short history which the Colony then had, but the virtues of some one of its living members. He knew well, or would soon learn, the character of Newport, as the earliest and most conspicuous sailor that had been directly connected with the Colony. He had doubtless heard of his daring exploits in the Spanish West Indies, and knew all about his early voyages to Virginia. And

less in his father's office, who was long the clerk of the House of Burgesses, and in the office of his brother Peter, who was also the clerk of the House, and finally its speaker, — and his opportunities for knowing the manners, customs, and traditions of the Colony were most favorable. He died in 1716.

* John Chamberlain, Esq., writing from London to Sir Dudley Carlton, Dec. 18, 1611, says: "Newport, the Admiral of Virginia, is newly come home, and brings word of the arrival there of Sir Thomas Gates and his company, but his lady died by the way in some part of the West Indies. He [that is Gates] hath sent his daughters back again, which I doubt not is a piece of prognostication that himself means not to tarry long." This is the latest authentic notice we remember to have seen of Captain Newport in connection with the colony of Virginia. He subsequently entered into another service, that of the East-India Company. In a letter from the Rev. Thomas Lor-kin to Sir Thomas Puckering, Bart., dated London, July 21, 1614, the writer says: "Captain Newport, who undertook the conduct of Sir Robert Shirley into Persia, hath, under one and the self same labour, made the voyage of the East Indies, and is here within these three or four days safely arrived, having brought a rich lading home with him, though the chief commodity be pepper." ("The Court and Times of James the First," London, 1849, vol. i., p. 154, 338.) The journal of this voyage of Newport may be seen in Purchas, i. 488. It is interesting to connect the name of the old Virginia Admiral with that of the celebrated Robert Shirley, or Sherley, whose history, with that of his two brothers, savors more of romance than of reality. (See Baker's Chronicle, London, 1670, p. 435; Retrospective Review, vol. ii. p. 351.) — NOTE BY MR. DEANE.

we know that Sir William Newce was Gookin's neighbor, whom he saw daily face to face, and with whom he was constantly engaged in public affairs. He might thus be disposed to unite the names of the two men in a common bond; and it must be confessed, that the baptism of the place by other hands than those of the persons who bore the name, has a more delicate significance in the estimation of posterity, than if it had been performed by either one of the parties themselves.

If it be inquired how the true name of the point should have been mistaken so early as three years after its deliberate baptism by Newport himself, and the error have continued so long, it may be answered conclusively, that there is no evidence that the name was not written correctly from the first on this side of the Atlantic, and universally known at that day; and this is plainly to be inferred from the fact, that its true pronunciation, in spite of the discordant spellings, has reached our own times. But it had the misfortune of being printed, for the first time, in England; and printed, too, by Smith, who spelt all words badly; who always spelt the name of Newport himself incorrectly, and who spelt the name of Sir William, not Newce, as the knight spelt it, and as it is spelt in all our official records, but *Nuse*;* and who, believing, as he was bound to believe, that his own spelling of the word was right, might naturally enough take the Newce for *Newes*, as he spelt the latter word:† and the error, committed by one who was believed to be familiar with the persons and things of the New World, was adopted by others, whose works, all published abroad, were circulated in a Colony which never had a literature of its own; and which, for more than a century later than the date of the name, could not boast of a solitary press within its borders.

Let us hope that the united names of two such prominent men in our Colony, rescued at last from the dust of ages, will, like those of Hampden-Sidney and Randolph-Macon, now perform their proper office; and that NEWPORT-NEWCE will be recognized henceforth, not

* Smith's History, ii. 77.

† Newport and Captain Smith were hostile to each other; and Smith, in an official letter to the Treasurer and Council of Virginia (the London Company), treats Newport with great harshness. He writes, "The souldiers say many of your officers maintain their families out of that you sent us; and that Newport hath a hundred pounds a year for *carying newes*" (Smith, i. 202); that is, for making trouble between the settlers and the London Company. Newport would not have perpetuated, ten or twelve years after the date of that letter, and after Smith had left the Colony, an odious character of himself drawn by an opponent; and the magnanimity of Smith forbids the suspicion, that he substituted the word *Newes* for *Newce*, in the spirit of hostility to an old enemy.

only on the deck, but in the counting-room and in the printing office, and even in the august court of History itself, to which it truly belongs. I am, my dear sir, with great respect, truly yours,

HUGH BLAIR GRIGSBY.

To CHARLES DEANE, Esq., Cambridge.

The President spoke of his intention of sailing for Europe on the 12th of next month; and, as the stated time for the next meeting of the Society falls on the day after he shall have sailed, he expressed a wish to have an opportunity of meeting the members once more before he took his leave of them.

Whereupon, on motion of Professor WASHBURN, it was voted, that the next meeting of the Society be held on the 6th of June, one week earlier than the stated time.

Mr. DEANE referred to a photograph, exhibited at the meeting of the Society, in February, 1866, by Mr. Eliot, (and supposed to represent Columbus and his two sons), from an engraving by Wilson of a picture in one of the galleries in England. The photograph was sent to Mr. Eliot, who was desired to obtain some information respecting it. Mr. DEANE now exhibited two volumes of Bryan Edwards's "History of the West Indies," in one of which was the engraving from which the photograph referred to had been taken. Over the picture is inscribed, "Christopher Columbus and his sons Diego and Ferdinand;" and beneath, "From an ancient Spanish Picture in the possession of Edward Horne, Esq., of Bevis Mount, near Southampton." The original picture is further described in a prefatory note in vol. i. pp. xxiii, xxiv, of Edwards's work referred to above,—fifth edition, London, 1819.